



## **Increasing Usage Jail Line Transfer Case Study**



# VINE®

## Increasing Usage

### Increasing Usage of VINE

#### Transfer jail custody calls to VINE

Jails receive custody inquiries every day from people who don't know about VINE, or are simply afraid to use an automated system. This will probably always be the case, no matter how well we promote the service. If jails, particularly the larger facilities, can transfer these calls directly to VINE, we can increase usage considerably. This could be done several ways:

- Set VINE as a menu option (i.e. "Press 3 for offender custody information")
- Add an option that allows a live operator to transfer a custody inquiry call directly to your VINE service.
- Ensure that operators (particularly in small facilities) know to refer callers to VINE.



In Texas, this approach caused incoming VINE calls to increase by more than five times in just one month, information that could be used to help convince jail administrators of the potential. To communicate that information, we could:

- Develop a one-page overview illustrating the increase in usage this tactic has produced.
- Produce a brief case study that describes this process. This could be included on your Web site.
- Make this information part of VINE trainings.

#### Utilize John Walsh PSA

John Walsh donated his time for the production of two 30 second television PSAs. His program is one of the nation's most popular, and he is obviously closely associated with victims' rights. We can reach far more people by placing this spot with cable providers than we could by approaching network affiliates only. This tactic has proven successful in other communities: one in particular saw usage increase several times in the course of one month after the local cable outlet began airing the spot during prime time. It appeared on:

- |                  |       |
|------------------|-------|
| • Lifetime       | • BET |
| • Family Channel | • FX  |
| • Nickelodeon    | • MTV |
| • CNN2           |       |

#### Print advertising

Advertising in consumer and/or relevant state-based trade publications may be the most effective way to promote VINE. Focusing on popular consumer-based publications may be the best option here.

#### Media relations/securing local coverage

Training visits are a good opportunity to pursue media relations coverage. Approaching local news outlets approximately two weeks prior to a visit will help raise awareness and boost attendance at training. Media relations activities can include Pat Byron, and should be of particular emphasis in conjunction with National Crime Victims' Rights Week, and Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Newspaper interviews/editorials, as well as TV and radio talk shows and interview opportunities should be pursued. Additional promotional elements could include:

- Newspaper "PSAs," including basic VINE information. Ideal placement would be near the police reports, which are very popular and widely read, especially in smaller communities.



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- NCVRW and DVAM media packets, good promotional tools, and excellent sources of general VINE information for local media.

### **Training/Continuing Ed Credit**

We have an opportunity to offer CEU credit to our victim advocate training invitees. Carol Jordan offered to co-sponsor training with us this year, which would allow us to include language in our invitations, such as “this training meets the requirement for training pursuant to KRS 421.” We are continuing to investigate the possibility of offering CEU credit for attorneys, and for law enforcement. The State Prosecutor’s Conference is one potential source. VINE/victim notification should also be included in the police academy curriculum.



### **VINE Electronic Newsletter**

An e-newsletter would be an easy way to convey VINE information to key audiences, and allow you to reach individuals outside our primary constituencies. This could be e-mailed directly to the people we want to reach. It might include training updates, helpful suggestions about using the system, ideas for promoting it locally, success stories, provide upcoming training updates/locations, etc.



### **Law Enforcement Academy Training**

Appriss has a number of training tools that can be readily adapted for use in law enforcement academies. We can provide a training regimen, training tape, and training CD that could be used as the basis for a course, or in some other educational capacity. This would ensure law enforcement agencies do not lose sight of VINE in the course of officer “turnover,” since all new officers would receive training as part of their academy education.



## Case Study

### VINE/JAIL LINE TRANSFER

#### Case Study: Texas Pilot Project

##### Situation

A simple phone modification at the Dallas County jail is helping crime victims obtain vital offender custody information quickly. It's also helping to introduce greater numbers of concerned individuals to the nation's leading victim information and notification service.

Dallas is one of six counties that participate in the Texas VINE Pilot Project. This "miniature" statewide allows a victim to call a single toll-free number for custody information on offenders in any of the pilot counties. Bexar, Harris, Childress, Collinworth, El Paso and Dallas counties are home to some of Texas' largest metropolitan areas including Dallas, Houston, and El Paso. However, VINE usage has been surprisingly low in spite of this population that totals more than 6 million.

From January 2002 to January 2003, incoming calls averaged approximately 2,000 per month. By comparison, Cook County, Ill. — with a population of more than 5 million — averaged about 3,500 incoming calls. VINE's other multi-county project comprises seven California counties, an account with a total population of less than 2 million, averaging nearly 5,700 calls a month. Clearly, the Texas pilot project should have been doing much better.

Over the past seven years, Appriss has employed a variety of tactics aimed at increasing VINE usage among its customers nationwide. Many of these initiatives have used the media to raise awareness, and a few have produced measurable results, but none have truly integrated VINE with local law enforcement processes. In early 2002, Appriss began encouraging local law enforcement officials to make their local VINE number a transfer option for people calling the jail for custody information.

##### Dallas County's Solution

In October 2002, the Dallas County Sheriff's Office modified its jail's automated phone service. Victims and others calling the jail for offender custody information can now be directed to VINE quickly and easily. Dallas' modified script allows callers to:

- access instructions for locating an offender through VINE
- access information on registering for VINE notification
- respond to a notification received from VINE
- transfer directly to VINE for offender custody information

From the main menu, callers are directed to press 9 for information about using VINE, or if they have questions about a VINE notification call. The message also provides a phone number individuals can call if they are receiving VINE calls in error.

Pressing 2 gives callers two options: They can elect to seek custody information by transferring to the jail's booking department, or transfer to VINE. The script recommends transferring to VINE since the jail receives a high volume of custody calls. At this point, the caller can transfer to VINE by pressing 1. The recording also reads off the toll-free number.



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### The Results

Dallas County's new phone script had an immediate effect. Incoming calls to the Texas VINE pilot project went from just over 3,000 in October 2002 to more than 17,000 in November. New victim registrations increased nearly six times, the largest increase in more than a year. Since November 2002, the pilot project has averaged approximately 15,000 calls per month.

**Texas VINE Call Statistics**

Month	Incoming Calls	New Victims Registered
July 2002	2,502	568
August 2002	2,525	848
September 2002	2,410	716
October 2002	3,238	707
November 2002	17,364	1,014
December 2002	19,157	926
January 2003	9,364	1,261
February 2003	22,785	1,153
March 2003	30,098	1,456
April 2003	31,323	1,357
May 2003	35,599	1,501
June 2003	32,830	1,391
July 2003	38,649	1,465
August 2003	35,188	1,597

Chris Thompson, director of Communications and Central Services with the Dallas County Sheriff's Office, said providing callers with a direct transfer option to VINE has made it possible for people seeking custody information to receive a quicker response. The system has also familiarized more victims and concerned citizens with Texas VINE, an important factor because those people are now more likely to pass on that knowledge to others who could benefit from using VINE.

Thompson added that making the phone modifications took no more than two hours of technician time. In all, the (one-time) cost was approximately \$400 – quite a bargain, considering the surge in usage that resulted in Texas.

### Recommendations/Benefits

Responding to offender custody calls is a task jails can count on performing every day. In many larger facilities, this can be a time-consuming responsibility because booking personnel may receive hundreds of such calls each day. Allowing callers to transfer to VINE through your jail's phone system puts this automated system directly to work for you by putting custody information at their fingertips.

The key to modifying your phone script is to encourage callers to transfer to VINE. The best way is to convince them that doing so is their quickest route to the custody information they need. It is strongly recommended that any script modification include wording, such as:

**“Due to heavy call volumes, you can obtain offender custody information more quickly by transferring to VINE.”**





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This addresses one of the caller's main concerns: It lets them know they can avoid holding for an indeterminate amount of time while a jail official looks up the information. It also allows them to protect themselves and their family by obtaining custody information as quickly as possible.

Brevity is important to callers. It's recommended that the description of VINE leading to the speed dial transfer be kept short. The best approach is to provide the number of your VINE system, briefly explain the service, then tell the caller they can select an option to transfer to VINE.

**Example:**

**“The Smith County automated victim hotline is 1-800-xxx-xxxx. This is a free, 24-hour service providing quick access to offender custody status information. VINE also allows you to register for automatic notification when an offender's status changes. To obtain an offender's custody status, please have ready the offender's name or booking number. Due to heavy call volumes, you can obtain offender custody information more quickly by transferring to VINE. To be automatically transferred to Smith County VINE now, press 1.”**



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## Phone Line Transfer

### OPTION 1

#### Information played during the initial call:

*"Thank you for calling the <Agency's name> Jail. If you are calling to obtain custody information about an offender press <#>."*

#### What is heard once transferred:

*"Hello. You have reached the <State/Agency's> VINE service. This is a free, 24-hour service providing quick access to information about an offender's custody status."*

*"Through this system you can also register to receive an automatic notification call when an offender's custody status changes."*

*"In order to obtain information, please have the offender's name or identification number ready. If you also want to register to receive automatic notifications, please be ready to give a telephone number where you can be reached and a 4-digit personal identification number (PIN) that you will be able to remember."*

*"To reach the <Agency's> VINE service directly, 24 hours a day, call toll-free <1-8xx-xxx-xxxx>. Once again, the number for the <Agency's> VINE service is <1-8xx-xxx-xxxx>."*

*"To transfer to the VINE line now, press <#>. To repeat this information, press <#>. To return to the main menu, press <#>."*

Transfer call to the actual VINE line.



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## Phone Line Transfer

### OPTION 2

#### Information played during the initial call:

*"You have reached the <Agency's name>. If you know your party's extension please enter it now. If not, please make a selection from the following options."*

*"To obtain custody information about an offender, press <#>."*

#### What is heard once transferred:

*"Hello. You have reached the <State/Agency's> VINE service. This is a free, 24-hour service providing quick access to information about an offender's custody status."*

*"Through this system you can also register to receive an automatic notification call when an offender's custody status changes."*

*"In order to obtain information, please have the offender's name or identification number ready. If you also want to register to receive automatic notifications, please be ready to give a telephone number where you can be reached and a 4-digit personal identification number (PIN) that you will be able to remember."*

*"To reach the <Agency's> VINE service directly, 24 hours a day, call toll-free <1-8xx-xxx-xxxx>. Once again, the number for the <Agency's> VINE service is <1-8xx-xxx-xxxx>."*

*"To transfer to the VINE line now, press <#>. To repeat this information, press <#>. To return to the main menu, press <#>."*

Transfer call to the actual VINE line.



**VINE JAIL LINE TRANSFER**  
*Average VINE Usage Increases*  
(As of April 2005)

***Texas Statewide VINE***

Pre-November 2002

Avg. Monthly Incoming Calls      2,400  
Avg. Monthly Victim Registrations   750

Since Adding JLT

Avg. Monthly Incoming Calls   **60,000**  
Avg. Monthly Victim Registrations   **2,280**

***Ohio Statewide VINE***

Pre November 2003

Avg. Monthly Incoming Calls   2,600  
Avg. Monthly Victim Registrations   275

Since Adding JLT

Avg. Monthly Incoming Calls   **18,200**  
Avg. Monthly Victim Registrations   **640**

***Clark County, Nevada***

Pre-October 2003

Avg. Monthly Incoming Calls   265  
Avg. Monthly Victim Registrations   35

Since Adding JLT

Avg. Monthly Incoming Calls   **15,600**  
Avg. Monthly Victim Registrations   **800**

NV-Clark, Las Vegas Metro

	Calls			Phone Events			New Registrations	
	Month	In	Out	Total	Confirmed		New	Total
					Yes	No		
<i>May, 01</i>		35	2	37	2	0	2	5
<i>Jun, 01</i>		79	45	124	4	2	6	11
<i>Jul, 01</i>		48	26	74	2	1	3	12
<i>Aug, 01</i>		132	16	148	2	0	2	15
<i>Sep, 01</i>		63	2	65	2	0	2	19
<i>Oct, 01</i>		71	40	111	6	1	7	22
<i>Nov, 01</i>		103	30	133	8	0	8	36
<i>Dec, 01</i>		126	23	149	4	1	5	50
<i>Jan, 02</i>		169	229	398	21	4	25	70
<i>Feb, 02</i>		98	46	144	5	0	5	78
<i>Mar, 02</i>		151	99	250	8	6	14	95
<i>Apr, 02</i>		178	108	286	13	5	18	110
<i>May, 02</i>		191	43	234	7	1	8	124
<i>Jun, 02</i>		235	101	336	15	4	19	147
<i>Jul, 02</i>		135	138	273	15	8	23	159
<i>Aug, 02</i>		244	111	355	18	4	22	190
<i>Sep, 02</i>		205	121	326	17	4	21	205
<i>Oct, 02</i>		214	158	372	18	6	24	229
<i>Nov, 02</i>		172	172	344	13	6	19	248
<i>Dec, 02</i>		154	151	305	18	8	26	266
<i>Jan, 03</i>		206	148	354	12	9	21	287
<i>Feb, 03</i>		219	355	574	35	14	49	302
<i>Mar, 03</i>		294	92	386	9	4	13	317
<i>Apr, 03</i>		288	145	433	15	7	22	333
<i>May, 03</i>		240	136	376	16	6	22	344
<i>Jun, 03</i>		231	86	317	13	4	17	366
<i>Jul, 03</i>		211	210	421	21	6	27	387
<i>Aug, 03</i>		298	189	487	31	5	36	428
<i>Sep, 03</i>		1,126	303	1,429	44	12	56	527
Totals		5,916	3,325	9,241	394	128	522	527

NV-Clark, Las Vegas Metro

	Calls			Phone Events			New Registrations	
				Confirmed				
Month	In	Out	Total	Yes	No	Total	New	Total
<i>Oct, 03</i>	11,853	2,338	14,191	377	67	444	641	1,168
<i>Nov, 03</i>	12,646	3,108	15,754	433	112	545	656	1,824
<i>Dec, 03</i>	13,062	3,432	16,494	500	111	611	641	2,465
<i>Jan, 04</i>	14,300	4,702	19,002	586	163	749	723	3,188
<i>Feb, 04</i>	13,347	5,559	18,906	681	235	916	690	3,878
<i>Mar, 04</i>	14,891	7,138	22,029	697	286	983	778	4,656
<i>Apr, 04</i>	15,132	5,879	21,011	681	221	902	809	5,465
<i>May, 04</i>	15,456	5,793	21,249	610	237	847	721	6,186
<i>Jun, 04</i>	16,042	5,304	21,346	570	214	784	782	6,968
<i>Jul, 04</i>	16,894	5,416	22,310	644	209	853	824	7,792
<i>Aug, 04</i>	16,580	5,350	21,930	560	226	786	789	8,581
<i>Sep, 04</i>	15,985	5,264	21,249	630	209	839	858	9,439
<i>Oct, 04</i>	15,688	5,501	21,189	593	225	818	814	10,253
<i>Nov, 04</i>	16,012	5,319	21,331	593	219	812	837	11,090
<i>Dec, 04</i>	17,828	6,478	24,306	731	258	989	967	12,057
<i>Jan, 05</i>	18,859	9,002	27,861	963	476	1,439	984	13,041
<i>Feb, 05</i>	16,009	8,847	24,856	974	358	1,332	893	13,934
<i>Mar, 05</i>	19,155	11,809	30,964	1,192	489	1,681	991	14,925
<i>Apr, 05</i>	18,369	8,868	27,237	914	355	1,269	943	15,868
Totals	298,108	115,107	413,215	12,929	4,670	17,599	15,341	